

*‘Are There any Poor People Here?’: Immigrants, Aborigines, and
Multicultural Perceptions¹*

Mitchell Rolls

**Copyright © Mitchell Rolls 2014. This text may be archived
and redistributed both in electronic form and in hard copy,
provided that the author and journal are properly cited
and no fee is charged.**

Abstract: This overview paper highlights the urgent need for research in an area of national significance. The often disputatious debate vis-à-vis the history and legacy of contact and conflict between colonists, settlers and Aborigines is for the most part framed in ways that serve to exclude a significant proportion of Australian’s post World War II non-Anglo immigrant population. Terms characteristic of the debate—such as black/white, coloniser/colonised, Anglo/Aborigine, invader/invaded—are not inclusive of more recent immigrants, who for a range of disparate reasons fall outside the delimiters of these terms. Addressing Aboriginal disadvantage, achieving proposed constitutional reform, and establishing the foundations upon which mutual understandings and empathy can be built necessitates a more inclusive approach and language than that taken to date. In order to progress beyond the bluff binaries and stagnation of the dominant discourse, a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between all cross sections of the immigrant population and Aboriginal affairs is required. This paper sketches this need.

Keywords: Ethnic Minorities, Aborigines, Postcolonialism

Several months after the release to wide acclaim of the feature film *Samson and Deliah* (Thornton) a small group of Chinese academics from a Sydney University went to see it. In colloquial terms *they didn’t get it*. More specifically, what they “didn’t get” was the pervading ennui apparent on the remote Aboriginal community depicted, the apparent lack of individual enterprise to “better themselves”, and the failure to capitalise on what they saw as government largesse (Anonymous). An extemporary defence summarising the enduring nature of the historical legacy and explaining structural inequality provoked responses similar to the character Crocodile Dundee’s retort of “Call that a knife” when confronted by blade-wielding hoodlums in New York. Dundee produced a large hunting knife that dwarfed the intending assailant’s weapon. The academics countered that China’s populace too have suffered the burden of history and

¹ Thanks to the Centre for Colonialism and Its Aftermath at the University of Tasmania for funding that has facilitated this research. Thanks also to the helpful comments of two anonymous referees.

its legacies, both past and recent. The impact of policies such as the Great Leap Forward (1958-61) and the associated Great Famine, and the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), were all but unprecedented in terms of scale. Still today social welfare for those struggling in China is rare.

In August 2008 (29-30th) a conference took place in Canberra—"Race, Nation, History"—in honour of Henry Reynolds, the historian who has done so much to bring Aboriginal history to the popular imagination. Commenting from the floor on one of the papers the renowned subaltern and postcolonial scholar Dipesh Chakrabarty, an intellectual with long engagement with Australia, said words to the effect that although he was very familiar with Aboriginal history and the debates and controversies generated, most discourse was inevitably couched in terms that did not allow him purchase. As a Bengali, no matter how well read, travelled and cosmopolitan, the discourse appeared to exclude his engagement (Chakrabarty "Race"). He was referring to the crude binaries that haunt most scholarly work and discussions on Aboriginal affairs: black/white, coloniser/colonised, Anglo/Aborigine, invader/invaded and so on. Chakrabarty had raised these concerns seven years previously (see Chakrabarty "Reconciliation"), and it was obvious little had changed. Furthermore, comments similar to this are increasingly heard, more so from outside the academy. It comes up in response from taxi drivers when they ask what is it "you do" (Indian in Canberra and Melbourne; Sudanese in Hobart), and it is an issue our international students alert us to. Bewildered by finding herself inadvertently in a charity-run second hand clothing store, an international PhD candidate enquired "Are there any poor people here?" (Xia). Because of the availability of various welfare initiatives this Chinese candidate found it inconceivable that anyone, including Aborigines, could be so poor in Australia that they would struggle to have sufficient resources to meet daily necessities.

Comments like these above are unsurprising. The frequently disputatious debate vis-à-vis the history and legacy of contact and conflict between colonists, settlers and Aborigines continues to be argued in terms that afford no purchase to Australia's burgeoning post World War II population and their descendants. Whereas at the end of World War II 90% of Australia's then population of seven million were born in Australia, of today's population of 22.55 million over a quarter (27%) were born overseas (ABS "Reflecting"). According to the 2011 census, a further 20% of the population had at least one parent born overseas (ABS "Reflecting"). Although the United Kingdom continues to be the largest source of overseas born residents followed by New Zealand, the next largest sources are China, India then Vietnam. There was also a significant increase in the Iranian-born population between the 2006 and 2011 census (52.8%) (Dept. of Immigration "The Iran-Born Community"), and Iraqi population (48.1%) (Dept. of Immigration "Community Information Summary: Iraq Born"). In addition over the decade between 2000 and 2011 there was a significant increase in settler arrivals from Lebanon, Sudan, Burma, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, Hong Kong, Pakistan, and Afghanistan (Dept. of Immigration "Settler Arrivals 2010-2011" 5-11). There has also been over the last four years in particular a dramatic rise in asylum seekers from Iraq, Afghanistan and Sri Lanka. Furthermore, the last two decades have witnessed an extraordinary growth in international students studying in Australia, the majority being from non-Anglo countries. In 2011 the top three source nations for Australia's international student population were China (20%), India (12%) and South Korea (5%), a trend that continues (ABS "Australian Social Trends"). Although many within these various constituencies appear interested in Indigenous issues, by and large

scholarly and public discourse excludes their participation. As the historian Peter Read notes, it “is a very large, sympathetic and persuadable audience awaiting an invitation to enter the debate” (Read 95). Not only is it necessary for all sectors of a community to be included in debates that impinge on national affairs, it is necessary in order for there to be understanding of and support for measures to redress enduring inequality.

Despite the manifest importance of national debates being inclusive of all cross sections of the population scant research has been undertaken on the relationship between post World War II immigrants, including those arriving more recently, and Aborigines. There is extensive literature regarding Aborigines, Aboriginal literature, Aboriginal art, Aboriginal-colonial and Aboriginal-Anglo settler relations across a range of specialist and interdisciplinary disciplines—anthropology, literary criticism, historiography, postcolonial studies, cultural studies, political science, education, art theory and more. Similarly there is extensive literature across a range of disciplines on multiculturalism and cognate issues in the Australian (and international) context. There is very little scholarship considering the relationship between these cohorts (Indigenous and “ethnic” immigrant) in the context of the legacy of Australian Aboriginal-settler relations. There is even less scholarship revealing the attitudes towards and perceptions of Australian Aborigines held by Australia’s ethnic communities and various diaspora. Noting this absence Read has referred to those immigrants who are neither of Aboriginal or British descent as “The Third Side of the Triangle” (Read 87). Despite Read completing a limited number of interviews with representatives of the immigrant cohort in 1996, and more widespread recognition today that a number of minority groups hold varying opinion about Aborigines and associated affairs, to date little extended research has been undertaken. This is notwithstanding a certain degree of scholarship investigating the attitudes of Indigenous Australians towards immigrants in general, specific ethnic minorities and multiculturalism per se (see, for example, Dunn et al. and Van den Berg).

Several articles and book-length publications consider particular aspects of the relationship between specific ethnic minorities and Aborigines. Val Colic-Peisker and Farida Tilbury have examined conflict between recently arrived African (primarily Sudanese) refugees and Aboriginal youth in Perth (Colic-Peisker and Tilbury). The anthropologist Erez Cohen discusses the affiliations that Latin American migrants and political refugees in Adelaide “have with the notion of indigeneity” (Cohen 39). More broadly David Pearson considers the problematic of citizenship in British settler societies comprising as they do Indigenous minorities, immigrant (and ethnic) minorities, and settler majorities (Pearson). Guy Ramsay’s empirical study concerns identity formation amongst rural and urban Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders who have Chinese ancestry (Ramsay). Through an analysis of the commercial viability of the film *Rabbit-Proof Fence* Queenie Chan describes an account of Indigenous-settler relations that is “not reduced to a black and white discourse” (Chan). Minoru Hokari explores critically the relevance of the reconciliation movement to Japanese migrants, significantly noting the exclusionary (of Asians) discourse produced by the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation (Hokari). Peta Stephenson has explored—and continues to do so—the “long and complex history of Indigenous engagement with Islam” (Stephenson “Syncretic Spirituality: Islam in Indigenous Australia” 427, and *passim*).²

² See also Stephenson “Indigenous Australia’s Pilgrimage to Islam”; Stephenson *The Outsiders Within: Telling Australia’s Indigenous-Asian Story*.

Like most who have considered the intersection of non-British immigrant and Australian Indigenous issues, historian Ann Curthoys notes how “multicultural discourse at large remains remarkably inattentive to the colonial features of current Australian life” (Curthoys 34). On the other hand most scholarship with interests in Aboriginal issues is similarly inattentive to the relevance these issues have to Australia’s ethnic minorities. The “bifurcation of contemporary debates on ‘the Indigenous’ and ‘the multicultural’” (Stephenson “New Cultural Scripts” 57) continues. This is despite a range of cultural productions—theatre, novels, and the visual arts, the latter most prominently through the collaborative work of the Chinese artist Zhou Xiaoping and John Bulunbulun of east Arnhem Land (Bradley and Clements)—that explore at various levels of intimacy and hostility cross-cultural relationships between Aborigines and non-Anglo others (Stephenson “New Cultural Scripts”).

A current issue that highlights the failure to invite the “very large, sympathetic and persuadable audience ... to enter” (Read 97) debates concerning Aboriginal affairs is the proposal to put to a referendum constitutional amendments desired by Aborigines and many others. This bi-partisan federal government-supported initiative proposes changes to Australia’s constitution to include formal recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and to remove certain race-based clauses (amongst other matters such as recognition of Indigenous languages). Although the prominent lawyer and member of the Jewish community Mark Leibler was the Co-Chair of the Panel on Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and the panel consulted widely and received over 3,600 submissions (J-Wire), the reference group, expert panel who conducted the consultations and wrote the report, campaign partners comprising a steering committee and associated network, director and deputy director, include no prominent body representing any of Australia’s disparate ethnic minorities. The campaign partners, for example, comprising more than 40 organisations, were drawn from “peak Indigenous organisations, faith groups, law reform and human rights groups and major charities” (Recognise). Although various ethnic constituencies may have been incidentally included as individual members of one or more of these organisations, the omission of a representative body is an indication of the institutional framing of these issues. Given that 27% of Australian’s population was born overseas, with another 20% having at least one parent born overseas, 30% reporting both parents born overseas and almost 80% of migrants applying for and being granted citizenship when eligible to do so (Smith et al. 22), this oversight is significant. Of the 4.4 million migrants who responded to the 2006 census, 68% (3 million people) reported they were Australian citizens (Smith et al. 8). These are not insignificant numbers, which is even more apparent considering what is necessary for proposals in a referendum to be passed. The legislative Bill must pass both houses of federal parliament in order to be presented and then (normally) achieve both a nation-wide majority in favour and a majority of the states. Territory votes (the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory) count towards the national majority and are not considered in the tally of the majority of states).

The reconciliation movement provides further evidence of the failure to recognise Australia’s changing demographics, and the relevance of the reconciliation debates to the disparate cohorts comprising our total population. As noted by Cohen, “[t]he distinction between the indigenous/non-indigenous Australians that is actively promoted in advancing Aboriginal ‘Firstness’, means that Australians who are of neither British descent nor Aboriginal descent are often left out of the debate” (Cohen 41). And it is not

simply that non-Anglo others are thought to be (even if only through oversight) irrelevant to these debates. When out of their own interest they seek information they find the discourse itself to be exclusionary. As Cohen argues,

[r]econciliation is predominantly constructed around notions of “shame” and “guilt” that are addressed in relation to the “nation’s” past and future. A critical look at his rhetoric reveals that it is often imagining an audience that is white and English speaking (Cohen 41).

This “stubbornly binary (black/white) discourse” (see Anderson 382, and *passim*) serves to marginalise the impact of “transnational migrant flows”, and any “tensions over ethnicity, race and cultural difference risk being conceived within a problematic that is internal to the nation, to Australian history, Australian culture, Australian racism” (Anderson 386).

The tendency for scholars and others (such as those behind the reconciliation movement and the “Recognise” organisation promoting the need for constitutional reform) to sweep immigrant communities into the purview of their more Anglo-oriented concerns is widespread. Crude black-white binaries are drawn and made to suffice as an explanatory catch-all. For example, the subtitle to Sarah Maddison’s recent *Beyond White Guilt* is *The Real Challenge for Black-White Relations in Australia*. In the introduction Maddison asserts that “White Australia was settled on a land that did not belong to *us*”, and that “Deep in our hearts *every Australian* knows this to be true” (Maddison 3, my emphasis). Attempting to include those for whom this statement might not be quite as straightforward or self-evident as Maddison hopes, she cites the historian Ann Curthoy’s comment that “the continuing presence of colonialism has implications for all immigrants, whether first-generation or sixth”, and that we all “are beneficiaries of a colonial history. We share the situation of living on someone else’s land” (Maddison 6; see Curthoys 32). Maddison also cites critical race theorist professor Sara Ahmed who states even more bluntly that “non-white non-Indigenous Australians also walk on stolen ground” (Maddison 6). Searching for some point of convergence between non-white non-Indigenous Australians and Indigenous Australians, Ahmed suggests that “[i]t is the shared experience of violence, which we can re-describe as the ongoing force of racism, which might point to solidarity between non-white non-Indigenous Australians and Indigenous Australians” (Ahmed 78). Needless to say historical violence in one context (Australia) cannot be so easily made the equivalent of contemporary violence in another from which some refugees and asylum seekers amongst others have escaped. In the context of the experience of many immigrants, Maddison’s and Ahmed’s attempts to make respectively guilt, shame and racism the inclusionary catch-all of Australia’s diverse population appear shallow and informed more by ideology than reasoned analysis. Many immigrants have come from countries experiencing internal political, ethnic, religious, and / or tribal rifts, and as Curthoy’s notes, have “their own versions of historical victim narratives ... ” (Curthoys 34). Peta Stephenson is correct in concluding that

[w]hat is needed then, is a new national narrative that neither separates nor artificially equates Indigenous and migrant communities and discourses. ... Ongoing research into the positioning of migrant or diasporic communities in relation to Indigenous people could assist in undermining the central

conflict of black versus white that presently occupies reconciliation debates (Stephenson “New Cultural Scripts” 68).

With respect to approaches to multiculturalism Canada is the country with which Australia is most often compared. Like Australia Canada has minority Indigenous populations, various immigrant minorities and a majority (though divided in Canada between Anglo and French constituencies) settler population. Particularly this century the imbrication between these various constituencies has attracted the attention of researchers. Unlike Australia where “multiculturalism and Aboriginality [largely remain] divided into two separate debates” (Cohen 40), Canadian scholarship is increasingly examining how these debates intersect. For example, Richard Day and Tonio Sadik discuss the conflict between Indigenes and the Canadian state, and the role that liberal multiculturalism (with its imagined inclusive nationalism) plays in frustrating Indigenous interests in land and aspirations to be self-determining (Day and Sadik). Harsha Walia argues that the denial of Indigenous history and self-determination in Canada “is closely linked with the exclusion and detention of migrants” (Walia 21). Numerous movements have formed seeking to build “solidarity between immigrant/refugee communities” and Indigenous groups (Walia). The journal *Canadian Issues* (2012, Summer) recently devoted an entire issue to explorations of the interrelationships between Aboriginal peoples, immigrants and settlers.

In New Zealand too, a growing body of research is addressing these interrelationships, and an issue arises there parallel to if not similar to the one I have described for Australia. For many years much scholarly and demotic discussion concerning New Zealand has discoursed on the issue of bi-culturalism, referring to the co-existence of Māori and Pākehā. But New Zealand has a large and growing Pacific Island settler population, and this cohort is arguing that the debates about bi-culturalism are exclusionary in that the framing of the debates not only permit them no access, they do not acknowledge their existence. The major ethnic groups of permanent migrants to New Zealand are currently European (42%), Chinese (15%), South African (9%) and Indian (8%). Twelve percent of permanent immigrants come from the Pacific region (IMSED Research). The major Pacific Islander population in New Zealand comprises 50% Samoans, Cook Islanders 20%, Tongans 18%, Niuean 8%, and Fijina 4%. Two thirds (67%) of these Pacific People live in Auckland (Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, 2014). As a neighbouring settler nation, and a nation that enjoys a different sort of relationship between the majority settler and Indigenous population (biculturalism, treaty, etc), New Zealand provides an important comparison and contrast with the situation in Australia re immigrants and Aboriginal affairs. Of relevance also is that New Zealand is the second highest source country for immigrants to Australia, 15% of whom identify as Maori. Australia too has an increasing Pacific Islander population.

Addressing Aboriginal disadvantage, constitutional reform, and establishing the foundations upon which mutual understandings and empathy can be built necessitates a more inclusive approach than that taken to date. Furthermore, we can no longer deceive ourselves that the issues underpinning the often fractious settler-Aboriginal debate are peculiarly of a domestic nature, internal to our nation alone. Inviting the participation of Australia’s various ethnic communities into the debates over Aboriginal affairs will continue to be non-productive if the discourse driving these debates remains exclusionary. Knowing how significant immigrant groups understand these issues (if at all), and what issues they consider to be relevant, is crucial if the discourse surrounding

Aboriginal affairs is to be emancipated from the bluff binaries it remains locked in. It is not inconceivable that without a more inclusionary discussion the proposed referendum seeking constitutional amendment to formally recognise Aborigines in the constitution among other related matters will struggle to gain the necessary support.

Works Cited

- Ahmed, Sara. "The Politics of Bad Feeling." *Australian Critical Race and Whiteness Studies Association Journal* 1 (2005): 72-85. Print.
- Anderson, Kay. "Thinking 'Postnationally': Dialogue across Multicultural, Indigenous, and Settler Spaces." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 90.2 (2000): 381-91. Print.
- Anonymous. "Responses to viewing *Samson and Delilah*." 15 March, 2010. Pers. Comm.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). "Reflecting a Nation: Stories from the 2011 Census, 2012–2013: Cultural Diversity in Australia." Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012. Accessed 2 February, 2013. <<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/2071.0main+features902012-2013>>.
- . "Australian Social Trends: International Students." Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011 (December). Accessed 19 June, 2014. <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4102.0Main+Features20Dec+2011>
- Bradley, James, and Rachel Clements. *Ochre and Ink: A Chinese Artist in Aboriginal Australia*. Australia: Ronin Films, 2012. Released 21 February, 2012.
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh. "Race, Nation, History: A Conference in Honour of Henry Reynolds." Canberra: National Library of Australia. 29-30 August, 2008.
- . "Reconciliation and Its Historiography: Some Preliminary Thoughts." *UTS Review : Cultural Studies and New Writing* 7.1 (2001): 6-16. Print.
- Chan, Queenie Monica. "Reconstructing Images of History: Christopher Doyle, *Rabbit-Proof Fence* and Postcolonial Collage." *Studies in Australasian Cinema* 2.2 (2008): 121-40. Print.
- Cohen, Erez. "Multiculturalism, Latin Americans and 'Indigeneity' in Australia." *The Australian Journal of Anthropology* 14.1 (2003): 39-52. Print.
- Colic-Peisker, Val, and Farida Tilbury. "Being Black in Australia: A Case Study of Intergroup Relations." *Race and Class* 49.4 (2008): 38-56. Print.
- Curthoys, Ann. "An Uneasy Conversation: The Multicultural and the Indigenous." *Race, Colour and Identity in Australia and New Zealand*. Eds John Docker and Gerhard Fischer. Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2000. 21-36. Print.
- Day, Richard J.F., and Tonio Sadik. "The BC Land Question, Liberal Multiculturalism and Aboriginal Nationhood." *BC Studies*.134 (2002): 5-34. Print.
- Department of Immigration and Border Protection. "The Iran-Born Community." Canberra: Australian Government, 2012. Accessed 26 November. 2013. <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/statistics/comm-summ/textversion/iran.htm> Web.

- Department of Immigration and Citizenship. "Community Information Summary: Iraq Born." Canberra: Australian Government, 2013. Accessed 26 November, 2013. <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/statistics/commsumm/pdf/iraq.pdf>
- . "Settler Arrivals 2010-2011." Canberra: Australian Government, 2011. 1-70. Accessed 26 November, 2013. <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/statistics/settler-arrivals/settler-arrivals-2010-11.pdf>. Web.
- Dunn, Kevin M., Alanna Kamp, Wendy S. Shaw, James Forrest, and Yin Paradies, "Indigenous Australians' Attitudes Towards Multiculturalism, Cultural Diversity, 'Race' and Racism." *Journal of Australian Indigenous Issues* 13.4 (2011): 19-31. Print.
- Hokari, Minoru. "Globalising Aboriginal Reconciliation." *Cultural Studies Review* 9.2 (2003): 84-101. Print.
- IMSED Research. "Demographic Characteristics of Permanent Migrants." Department of Labour. Auckland: New Zealand Government, 2014. 1-2. Accessed 30 January, 2014. <http://www.dol.govt.nz/research/migration/lisnz/ff/DOL10705-16-LisNZ-FastFacts-1-Demographics.pdf>.
- J-Wire Staff. "Leibler Panel Calls for Constitution Change." *J-Wire: Jewish Online News from Australia and New Zealand*, 2012 (20 January). Accessed 24 November, 2013. <http://www.jwire.com.au/news/leibler-co-chairs-panel-on-constitution-change/21978>.
- Maddison, Sarah. *Beyond White Guilt: The Real Challenge for Black-White Relations in Australia*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2011. Print.
- Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs. "About Pacific People in New Zealand." Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs. Auckland: New Zealand Government, 2014. Accessed 1 February, 2014. <http://www.mpia.govt.nz/pacific-peoples-in-new-zealand/>
- Pearson, David. "Theorizing Citizenship in British Settler Societies." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 25.6 (2002): 989-1012. Print.
- Ramsay, Guy M. "The Family and Cultural Identity in Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders of Chinese Ancestry: A Rural-Urban Divide." *Journal of Family Studies* 6.2 (2000): 199-213. Print.
- Read, Peter. "Pain, Yes; Racism, No: The Response of Non-British Australians to Indigenous Land Rights." *The Resurgence of Racism: Howard, Hanson and the Race Debate*. Eds Geoffrey Gray and Christine Winter. Clayton: Monash Publications in History in association with the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies/ANU, 1997. 87-95. Print.
- Recognise. "Recognise." 2012. Accessed 24 November, 2013. <http://www.recognise.org.au>
- Smith, David, and Janice Wykes, Sanuki Jayarajah, Taya Fabijanic. "Citizenship in Australia." Department of Immigration and Citizenship. Canberra: Australian Government, 2011. 1-25.
- Stephenson, Peta. "Indigenous Australia's Pilgrimage to Islam." *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 32.3 (2011): 261-77. Print.
- . "New Cultural Scripts: Exploring the Dialogue between Indigenous and 'Asian' Australians." *Journal of Australian Studies* 27.77 (2003): 57-68. Print.
- . *The Outsiders Within: Telling Australia's Indigenous-Asian Story*. Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2007. Print.
- . "Syncretic Spirituality: Islam in Indigenous Australia." *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 24.4 (2013): 427-44. Print.
- Thornton, Warwick. *Samson and Delilah*. Australia: Madman Entertainment, 2009. (Released 20 February, 2009). Film.

- Van den Berg, Rosemary. *Nyoongar People of Australia: Perspectives on Racism and Multiculturalism*. International Studies in Sociology and Social Anthropology. Vol. 84. Boston: Brill, 2002. Print.
- Walia, Harsha. "Resisting Displacement, North and South: Indigenous and Immigrant Struggles." *West Coast Line* 42.2 (2008): 21-26, 160. Print.
- Xia, Fang. "Are There any Poor People Here?" 11 May, 2013. Pers. Comm.

Mitchell Rolls is Head of Discipline (Aboriginal Studies) in the School of Humanities, University of Tasmania, President of the International Australian Studies Association and Deputy-Director of the interdisciplinary research centre the Centre for Colonialism and Its Aftermath. He publishes widely on issues pertaining to cultural identity, race and representation, and cultural appropriation; and with Dr Murray Johnson co-authored *The Historical Dictionary of Australian Aborigines* (Scarecrow Press, 2011); co-edited with Associate Professor Anna Johnston *Reading Robinson: Companion Essays to George Augustus Robinson's Friendly Mission* (Monash UP 2012), and is currently co-authoring a book on *Walkabout* magazine (Anthem Press).